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A Doll's Christmas

.....By LAWTON JOHNSON

A Quaint Tale of Life in the Nursery When Little Boys and Girls Are All Sound Asleep

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On Christmas eve a wax doll sat on a chair in a pretty room in which a number of children were in bed. A fire was burning on the hearth. Stockings were hanging to be filled with gifts for the children who were sleeping soundly, doubtless dreaming of what they were to receive in the morning. The face of one of them, a delicate fair haired boy, was turned toward the doll, and she did not tire looking at it, for the face, though pale and thin, was very delicately molded.

On the mantel were two figures in porcelain. One was a boy in an old fashioned coat and knee breeches, with a sword at his waist and a cocked hat and feather. His right hand was on the hilt of his sword, and he looked like a figure of Napoleon. The other was a girl, with a short dress and a sailor hat. Her head was poised on a side, and she looked very well satisfied with herself. Indeed, she was very pretty.

"How do you do?" said the girl image to the doll. "Don't you think this a pleasant room?"

"Indeed it is, but I've not seen many."

"I was only born"—She paused to

the little pale faced boy with his head resting on his arm, the girl image on the mantel with her head on one side thinking how pretty she was and the boy thinking how much he knew about the world. The doll soon went to sleep again.

In the morning she was awakened by a shouting. The children were running about in their night clothes, taking their toys from their stockings and chattering like monkeys. The fair haired boy set up in bed and looked on, for he was too delicate to get up like the other children. The doll noticed that he had great blue eyes, which seemed ever so large as he looked wonderingly at all that was going on. Then there came a knocking on the wall, and the children knew that it was a signal for them to get back to bed and not take cold, and back they scampered, laughing and tumbling over one another, and covered themselves up.

Presently the father and mother came in and distributed the toys. The doll was for one of the girls, but the boy insisted on having it himself. Then when all were loaded with presents they carried them down to the breakfast room.



WRITING TO DEAR OLD SANTA CLAUS.



"SANTA CLAUS HAS BEEN HERE."

on the mantel. "It's just as well; the world isn't all like this household."

"It's just as well," echoed the girl image. "Your beauty will not have to fade."

"I don't want to go," cried the doll mournfully. "I want to stay with my blue eyed boy. The world may be full of sadness, but there must be pleasure as well, for it is here."

There was something so plaintive in her voice that even the images refrained from any further remarks. The fire blazed hotter, and the wax, which had as yet only softened, began to melt. There was a drop of melted wax.

Oh, that her little boy would get up and move her back from the fire! But he slept on peacefully, and as she had no voice for real children she couldn't call to him.

So the doll felt that she was melting away. Drop by drop she fell on the floor. The room, with its rich hangings, the children sleeping, the firelight flickering, the shadows and, above all the memory of her brief existence—for after all, a doll can only exist—seemed to be gradually fading away. She sighed to think that she couldn't have been born with a soul, to be loved and go on loving forever; that she could not grow up like a real child to see the unfolding of all the wonderful things in the world, passing from one existence to another instead of going out altogether. Then she thought that she might never have been born at all, never have had the one glimpse of the happy household, the one Christmas.

When the children were all asleep, the doll looked up from the chair at the images on the mantel. She was too happy to go to sleep.

"What a lovely day I have had," she said.

"Just wait," replied the boy image "till you have been knocked about the world awhile and you'll see." He looked as wise as an owl.

"I think it very nice," said the girl image, "so long as you are young and pretty, but I don't like the idea of getting old and crumpled, perhaps having my arms or legs broken off."

The wind was rising without, and suddenly the fire blazed with a cheerful warmth. It was very pleasant for awhile, but presently it seemed to be too hot. The doll thought she began to feel a softening in her feet. She didn't know what it meant, but it frightened her. It extended to her legs; then she felt it in her arms and at last in her face and neck. A lot of wood fell down on the coals and the fire blazed higher, hotter than ever. The doll felt herself melting away.

"You're going," said the boy figure the blue eyed boy and her single day of love. So she said: "I can't understand it. I will try not to murmur, but trust that it is all for the best."

And then—and then she awoke! The horror of melting had only been a dream. She had fallen asleep before the hot fire, but some kind hand had drawn the chair back, and in a few moments she was again clasped in the fond arms of her blue eyed boy.

The Young Man—Dearest, what do you want to put our wedding off another six months for?

The Girl—Because I overheard my two younger sisters the other day telling each other how much more of pa's money they were going to have to spend on themselves after I was out of the way.—Chicago Tribune.

CARELESS SHOPPERS.

How Some Women Lose Their Money and Then Blame Thieves.

"Half the thefts that women charge to pickpockets," said the reformed burglar, "are not thefts at all, but simply cases of loss from their own carelessness. Don't tell them that I said so, though, for I've had enough blame to bear in my day, but that's the truth. If a woman goes home and makes a hulabaloo about being robbed she gets more sympathy, but let her say she lost her money and she has to shoulder the whole responsibility and be bound fault with into the bargain."

"But what becomes of the pocketbooks and purses? They are not going off of themselves."

"Their owners lose them without knowing it. They lay them down or drop them, and they are picked up by somebody who doesn't run around looking for the person they belong to. Here is a case in point. A woman seated herself before a bargain counter piled with remnants of silk. After turning over a few pieces she felt something fall into her lap and picked up a fat leather pocketbook.

"Hello," she says, "here's a purse. It looks as if it had a lot of money in it," and she handed it to the clerk, who laid it on a shelf back of him and said he would send it to the lost and found department.

"When the woman had found the goods she wanted and went to take her pocketbook out of her reticule it wasn't there, and you ought to have heard her squeal. She declared she had it when she sat down to the counter. But it was gone, sure enough."

"A store detective was sent for, and he asked her a few questions. He was a friend of mine, and he told me the story. Then he asked to see the purse she had found, and it turned out to be her own. She had laid it down the first thing, and when it fell into her lap she was so surprised she didn't recognize it."

"And I really think that she hated to admit that she hadn't been robbed."—Chicago Record-Herald.

CHRISTMAS IN MEXICO.

How the Day Is Celebrated in the Land of Diaz.

In Mexico Christmas eve is observed, as in Spain, with the Noche Buena. The streets and plazas are thronged with people. Of all the shop windows so gay and brilliant in their holiday attire none is so bright as the confectioner's. Nowhere is the confectioner's art carried to a greater perfection. At midnight of the Noche Buena all Mexico forsakes its pleasures and repairs to the Misa del Gallo, or mass of the cock, a high mass of the most imposing character, which, in every one of the magnificent temples reared by the Catholic church in the City of Mexico, is celebrated exactly at midnight on Christmas eve or morning to commemorate the Saviour's birth. All the churches have an augmented choir and a large orchestra specially engaged for the occasion. The mass is celebrated with every concomitant that can heighten its effect and grandeur.

How It Happened.

"Fortune, you know, knocks at every man's door once."

"That explains it."

"Explains what?"

"How we came to miss her. Why in thunder doesn't she ring the bell? We never pay any attention to knocks."

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